



**The Aspen Institute Names Semifinalists for 2023 Aspen Prize,  
Adding a Milestone in the Award Process**

*25 Colleges Are Eligible for \$1 Million Prize to Be Awarded Next Year;  
Expanded Prize Field Signifies Growing Momentum for Community College Reform*

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**WASHINGTON, D.C., April 27, 2022** — Today the Aspen Institute announced 25 semifinalists for the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, adding a milestone in the award selection process. The \$1 million Aspen Prize is the nation’s signature recognition of community colleges that are achieving high, improving, and equitable outcomes for students. In years past, only ten finalists have been named on the road to the winner, and this change is designed to highlight the increased number of colleges across the country doing excellent work.

Awarded every two years, the Aspen Prize honors colleges with outstanding performance in five critical areas: teaching and learning, certificate and degree completion, transfer and bachelor’s attainment, workforce success, and equitable outcomes for students of color and students from low-income backgrounds. The winner will be announced in the spring of 2023.

“We are thrilled to see America’s community colleges making meaningful and measurable progress, educating people from all backgrounds and preparing them for good jobs,” said Josh Wyner, executive director of the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program. He cited graduation rates that have risen more than six percent for all students since 2015, and five percent for students of color. “These twenty-five colleges represent our dreams for a better country and a reinvigorated democracy.”

The semifinalists are:

- Amarillo College, TX
- Broward College, FL

- Cloud County Community College, KS
- Elgin Community College, IL
- Georgia Highlands College, GA
- Harper College, IL
- Hostos Community College (CUNY), NY
- Imperial Valley College, CA
- Itawamba Community College, MS
- Kingsborough Community College (CUNY), NY
- LaGuardia Community College (CUNY), NY
- Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, MS
- Moorpark College, CA
- North Iowa Area Community College, IA
- Northwest Iowa Community College, IA
- Pierce College, WA
- San Jacinto College, TX
- Seminole State College of Florida, FL
- South Florida State College, FL
- South Puget Sound Community College, WA
- Southwest Wisconsin Technical College, WI
- Southwestern Community College, NC
- Tallahassee Community College, FL
- Union County College, NJ
- Western Technical College, WI

The Aspen Prize selection process began this past October, when the Aspen Institute invited 150 community colleges to apply, based on data showing strong and improving student outcomes in key areas such as retention, completion, transfer, and equity. Applications went to a diverse selection committee of 16 higher education experts who reviewed extensive data and application narratives. Next, the committee will review interviews with leadership teams and narrow this selection of 25 semifinalists to 10 finalists, to be announced in early June 2022.

After 10 finalists are announced, next steps include:

- **Fall 2022:** Multi-day site visits to each of the 10 finalists, when teams of experts collect even more student outcomes data and gather insights about effective practices
- **Winter of 2023:** A distinguished jury decides who wins the Aspen Prize, based on quantitative data and qualitative information from each of the 10 finalists
- **Late spring 2023:** Announcement of the Aspen Prize winner

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**The Aspen Prize** is generously funded by Ascendium, the Joyce Foundation, JPMorgan, and the Kresge Foundation. Previous winners are:

- 2021: San Antonio College (TX)
- 2019: Indian River State College (FL) and Miami Dade College (FL)
- 2017: Lake Area Technical Institute (SD)
- 2015: Santa Fe College (FL)
- 2013: Santa Barbara City College (CA) and Walla Walla Community College (WA)
- 2011: Valencia College (FL)

**The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program** aims to advance higher education practices, policies, and leadership that significantly improve student outcomes, especially for the growing population of low-income students and students of color on American campuses. For more information, visit

[www.highered.aspeninstitute.org](http://www.highered.aspeninstitute.org) and [www.linkedin.com/showcase/aspenhighered](http://www.linkedin.com/showcase/aspenhighered), and follow @AspenHigherEd on Twitter. The Aspen Prize hashtag is #AspenPrize.

**The Aspen Institute** is a community-serving organization with global reach whose vision is a free, just, and equitable society. For 70 years, the Institute has driven change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve the world's greatest challenges. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the Institute has offices in Aspen, Colorado, and New York City, and an international network of partners. For more information, visit [www.aspeninstitute.org](http://www.aspeninstitute.org).